MULTI AWARD WINNING!

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THE WORLD'S BEST NEWS & FACTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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Making sense of the world

THE WEEK Junior

THE BEST MAGAZINE FOR CURIOUS KIDS

WICKED GOOD

Part two of the popular movie musical opens in theaters p20

VOTING CYCLE
US Presidential elections take place every four years, and midterm elections happen two years later, midway through a President's term.

Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani and his wife, Rama Duwaji, in New York City on election night

New York City fact file

- **POPULATION:** 8.48 million
- **GEOGRAPHY:** About 305 square miles, with five boroughs: Brooklyn, the Bronx, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island
- **HISTORY:** Settled by the Dutch in 1624, who called it New Amsterdam, and renamed New York by the British in 1674
- **ECONOMY:** $2 trillion, which is 9% of the entire US economy
- **CITY FLAG:** Shown above

Results of the 2025 election

On November 4, people across the US voted in state and local elections. Participation was higher than usual, and there were historic results in New York City, Virginia, California, and other locations.

What was the November 4 election?

Voters participated in what is known as an off-year election, when there are no races for President or Congress (branch of government that makes laws). Instead, they cast ballots for governors, mayors, state and local leaders, and new laws or policies. Democrats beat Republicans in the most high-profile races.

What happened in New York City?

In the race for mayor of America's most populated city, Zohran Mamdani, age 34, won with 50.4% of the vote. Mamdani, a Democrat, beat Andrew Cuomo, a former New York state governor who ran as an Independent, and Curtis Sliwa, a Republican. Born in Uganda to parents of Indian descent, Mamdani moved to New York with his family when he was 7 and will be the city's first Muslim, first South Asian, and second-youngest mayor. He is currently a member of the state legislature and has worked as a housing counselor for low-income residents. The campaign promises he made include building more affordable housing for New Yorkers, stopping rent increases for 2 million people living in certain types of apartments, creating city-owned grocery stores that have lower prices than regular stores, making public buses free, and reducing the cost of child care. More than 2 million people voted in the election, which was a record turnout.

What governors were elected?

In New Jersey, Democrat Mikie Sherrill defeated Republican Jack Ciattarelli, winning 56.5% of the vote. Sherrill, age 53, is a former Navy helicopter pilot who served four terms in the US House of Representatives (one half of Congress). She will be the second female governor of New Jersey and the first female military veteran to be elected governor in US history.

In Virginia, for the first time, the Democratic and Republican candidates for governor were both women. Abigail Spanberger, a Democrat, beat Republican Winsome Earle-Sears, the former lieutenant governor, with 57.3% of the vote to become the state's first female governor. Spanberger, age 46, served as an officer in the US Central Intelligence Agency before being elected to Congress four times beginning in 2018.

What were some other results?

In California, Proposition 50 passed with 64% of the vote. This measure changes the boundaries of voting districts and could make it easier for state Democrats to win five more seats in the US House of Representatives in 2026. It was proposed in response to similar Republican moves in Texas and other states. In Mississippi, a state that consistently votes Republican, two Democrats won special elections for the state Senate. In Detroit, Michigan, Mary Sheffield was elected mayor and will be the first woman to hold that office. In Maine, 64.1% of voters rejected a ballot initiative that would have required people to show photo identification in order to vote.

What will happen next?

Mamdani will be sworn in at midnight on January 1, 2026, and other newly elected officials will take office around the same time. On November 5, Republican elected officials in California and the California Republican Party sued to block Proposition 50, and that case will unfold in court. Other states have said they are debating whether to redraw their voting maps.

Beautiful train stations named

On November 3, the world's seven most beautiful passenger train stations were named by the Prix Versailles. The group awards 24 prizes every year for architecture that is innovative, ambitious, creative, sustainable, and reflective of local heritage. Other categories include museums, airports, and sports stadiums.

The winning stations include Mons Station, in Belgium, where a walkway lets passengers move between the city center and station without crossing any streets. At Villejuif-Gustave Roussy Station in France, a sweeping glass ceiling brings natural light more than 164 feet underground. Art is featured at Gadigal Station in Australia and Baiyun Station in China. KAFD and Qasr Al Hokm Stations in Saudi Arabia and Saint-Denis-Pleyel Station in France incorporate elements of nature.

The prizes are supported by UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization). Speaking of the winners, Jérôme Gouadain, head of the Prix Versailles, said, "At each site, beauty is given concrete form."

KAFD Station in Saudi Arabia

Prince William (fourth from left) with the prize recipients

AMAZING EFFORTS
For this year's Earthshot Prize, there were more than 2,400 nominees from 72 countries.

Earthshot Prize is awarded

The winners of the 2025 Earthshot Prize were announced at a ceremony in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on November 5. Established by Prince William of the UK in 2020, the prize recognizes ambitious projects focused on the environment.

Winners represent one of five Earthshot goals: protecting and restoring nature, cleaning our air, reviving our oceans, building a waste-free world, and fixing our climate. The ceremony was held in Latin America for the first time to emphasize Brazil's role in finding climate solutions and the environmental challenges the region faces.

The prize for helping nature went to re.green, a company using artificial intelligence and satellite data to restore the Amazon and Atlantic Forests in Brazil. In the second category, the city of Bogotá, Colombia, was recognized for implementing a cutting-edge plan that has reduced air pollution by 24% through such efforts as increasing walking and bike riding, reducing vehicle traffic, and making public transportation eco-friendly.

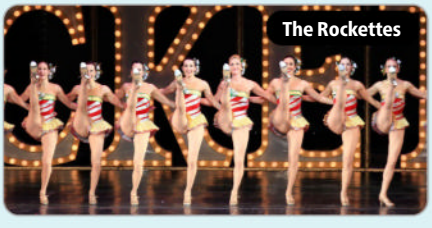
In the area of reviving oceans, a global agreement called the High Seas Treaty was honored as the first legal framework to protect marine biodiversity. The award for reducing waste went to Lagos Fashion Week in Nigeria for its efforts to create a sustainable fashion industry. In the final category, Friendship, a group in Bangladesh, was celebrated for protecting communities facing harm due to climate change.

The winners will each receive about $1.3 million to continue their efforts. "Their work is the proof we need that progress is possible," Prince William said in his speech at the ceremony.

IT'S AN AMAZING WEEK FOR...

A HAPPY HELLO

For the first time in nearly 15 years, a baby Bornean orangutan was born at the Los Angeles Zoo in California. The apes are critically endangered in the wild. Zoo staff called the arrival of the little boy (shown at right with his mother) a "fantastic moment."



The Rockettes

A HISTORIC SEASON

The world-famous Rockettes dance troupe is celebrating 100 years of high kicks. The group is best known for its Christmas Spectacular show at Radio City Music Hall in New York City, which mixes tap, jazz, and ballet and attracts more than 1 million audience members each year.

SHOWING KINDNESS

Wanting to help people during the government shutdown, AJ Owen and his sons, ages 9 and 7, set up a small food pantry on their lawn in Pennsylvania. The project went viral, inspiring similar efforts as well as donations that help keep Owen's pantry stocked. "Come grab what you need," he said. "I'm happy to have you."

ON THE COVER: UNIVERSAL PICTURES; ELECTRONIC ARTS, INC.; GETTY IMAGES (3);
ON THIS PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3); L.A. ZOO; ALAMY; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (2); ALAMY

DID YOU KNOW?
The second-longest government shutdown in US history began in 2018 and lasted for 35 days.

Some of the lawmakers who broke with the Democrats to vote with the Republicans

Democratic leader to retire

Nancy Pelosi (above), a Democrat from California, announced that she will retire after her 20th term in the House of Representatives ends in January 2027. Pelosi, age 85, was the first female Speaker of the House, the top position in that branch of Congress, making her one of the most powerful women in US history.

Steps taken to reopen government

When *The Week Junior* went to press on November 11, the longest shutdown of the federal government in US history, which began on October 1, was closer to coming to an end.

What happened?

On November 10, Day 41 of the shutdown, the Senate (one half of Congress, the branch of government that makes laws) voted 60–40 to approve a spending package put forth by Republicans that would reopen the government. All but one Republican senator voted for it, along with eight senators who typically vote with the Democrats. The bill did not guarantee what Democrats had been pushing for: the extension of subsidies to keep healthcare costs from rising significantly for more than 20 million people.

What motivated the eight lawmakers?

The day before, November 9, the lawmakers who typically vote with the Democrats said the shutdown was causing too much harm to the country and wasn't succeeding in forcing Republicans to agree to continue the healthcare subsidies that expire at the end of the year. "Staying in shutdown mode was not getting us anywhere," said Senator Jeanne Shaheen, a Democrat from New Hampshire. By reopening the government, Shaheen said lawmakers could begin to negotiate extending the healthcare subsidies.

How has the shutdown affected people?

The shutdown has caused the suspension of SNAP, America's largest anti-hunger program, which provides money for food for about 42 million low-income people. The funds have been delayed since November 1. About 1.4 million federal employees have also been going without pay during the shutdown. Because some of them work at airports, air travel has been disrupted. On November 9, nearly 2,200 flights were canceled and 7,200 were delayed, stranding thousands of travelers.

What will happen next?

The bill goes to the House of Representatives (the other half of Congress), and lawmakers there are expected to vote on the measure as soon as November 12. If the House passes the bill, it will go to President Donald Trump to be signed into law and the government would reopen. Democrats said they will continue fighting for the healthcare subsidies.

WORD OF THE WEEK

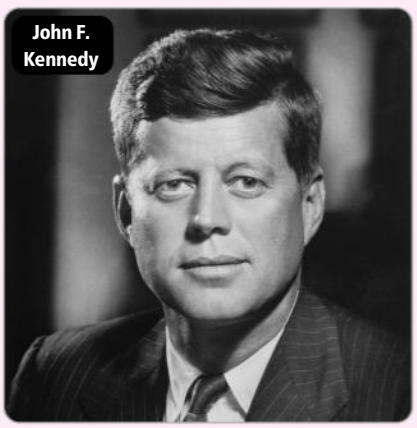
TRAIN

The root of the word "train" is the Latin *trahere*, meaning to "pull" or "draw." One meaning was the trailing part of a robe, which inspired the use of "train" to mean a set of connected things, such as railway cars. "Train" also means to "learn," since a teacher "pulls" their pupils along by educating them.

THE WEEK IN HISTORY

November 22, 1963
President John F. Kennedy is killed

On November 22, 1963, John F. Kennedy, the 35th US President, was shot and killed while riding in a convertible in a parade in Dallas, Texas. He was 46 and had become the youngest person elected to the office in 1960. After his death, Lyndon Johnson was sworn in as the 36th President. Kennedy's funeral on November 25 was televised to more than 300 million people around the world.



John F. Kennedy

Kendrick Lamar

Grammy nominees announced

Nominations for the 2026 Grammy Awards were announced on November 7. Kendrick Lamar received nine nominations, the most of any artist. Lady Gaga received seven, while Bad Bunny, Sabrina Carpenter, and Leon Thomas had six each. The film *KPop Demon Hunters* received four nominations, for its song "Golden" and its soundtrack. The awards will be presented in Los Angeles, California, on February 1, 2026, and will air live on CBS.

The new plate

License plate unveiled in Texas

Vehicle owners in Texas can now purchase a license plate featuring a Texas horned lizard, the state's official reptile. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department created it to celebrate 25 years of conservation funding through the license plate program. All money raised supports wildlife conservation efforts, including protecting the horned lizard, which an official called an "iconic Texas critter."

The three toys

Toys inducted into Hall of Fame

The National Toy Hall of Fame in Rochester, New York, has selected its 2025 inductees. Battleship, Trivial Pursuit, and slime were chosen from among 12 finalists. Battleship was one of the first computerized board games, Trivial Pursuit has sold more than 100 million copies, and slime lets kids express their creativity. "These toys have personal and cultural relevance for us all," the Hall of Fame said.

Dick Cheney

MAKING HISTORY
A total of 15 US Vice Presidents have gone on to become President.

Former Vice President is remembered

Dick Cheney, who held a variety of positions in the US government over several decades, including Vice President during the George W. Bush administration from 2001 to 2009, died on November 4 at the age of 84. He is considered one of the most powerful Vice Presidents in US history.

Cheney was born in Nebraska in 1941 and grew up in Wyoming. His government career began in 1969, during President Richard Nixon's administration. He later worked for President Gerald Ford, ultimately serving as his White House chief of staff. In 1978, Cheney was elected to the US House of Representatives, where he served for 10 years as a member of Congress from Wyoming. President George H. W. Bush named him secretary of defense in 1989.

Dick Cheney (center) receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom with George H. W. Bush and First Lady Barbara Bush in 1991

In 2000, Cheney was elected Vice President in a highly contested Presidential election. The vote count was so close that George W. Bush and Cheney were declared the winners only after the US Supreme Court ruled in their favor.

Many of Cheney's positions as Vice President were controversial. He advocated for the US to invade Iraq in 2003 and was later criticized for making false claims to gain support for the war. He pushed for close monitoring of US citizens, which legal experts said violated privacy laws, and he supported interrogating wartime prisoners in a way that many said was inhumane.

In recent years, Cheney became a critic of President Donald Trump, calling him "a threat to our Republic." In 2024, Cheney said he would vote for Trump's opponent, Kamala Harris, a Democrat, in the Presidential election.

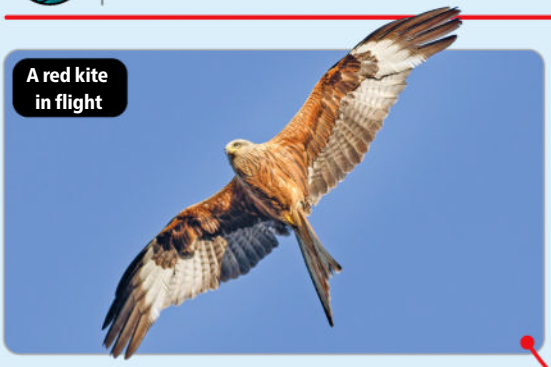
Cheney's funeral will be held on November 20 at the Washington National Cathedral in Washington, DC. "Dick was a calm and steady presence in the White House amid great national challenges," George W. Bush said in a statement. "For those two terms in office, and throughout his remarkable career, Dick Cheney's service always reflected credit on the country he loved."

THE WEEK'S SILLIEST HEADLINE

"Emu named Frank captured after 2 days on the loose in Arizona" *UPI*

GETTY IMAGES (4); CLPP; THE STRONG NATIONAL MUSEUM OF PLAY; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (4)

Around the world


A red kite in flight

Extremadura, Spain
Endangered birds return

Red kite chicks born in the UK have been transported to Extremadura to help revive Spain's struggling population of the birds of prey. They are on the brink of extinction in the region due to predators and human interference. In the 1980s, Spanish and Swedish red kites were sent to the UK to restore the population there. Now the UK has about 4,500 mating pairs and is able to send some back.

A kitchen worker

Sudan
Community kitchens at risk

A group of locally run kitchens that provide free food to millions of people in Sudan are at risk of closing. Since a civil war (conflict between groups in the same country) broke out in 2023, an estimated 24 million people have experienced shortages of food. The kitchens have stepped up to help, but the Islamic Relief aid organization reports that they are now facing a shortage of money, food, and safe drinking water.

The conference site

Belém, Brazil
Climate conference underway

COP30, the 12-day United Nations climate summit, began on November 10. About 50,000 leaders, experts, and activists from more than 190 countries will discuss plans to address climate change. Leaders of the US, China, and several other countries are not attending. Host country Brazil said it will focus on ensuring that nations achieve past goals, rather than setting new ones.

Paris, France
Ex-president released

Following a court ruling, France's former president Nicolas Sarkozy was released from prison. Sarkozy had been sentenced to five years in jail for illegally accepting money for his 2007 election campaign from Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi. After serving three weeks of the sentence, he has been released while his lawyers appeal for a new trial.

Nicolas Sarkozy

Pushkar, India
Fair features camels

From October 30 to November 5, a popular fair focused on camels took place in a small desert town in the state of Rajasthan. Camels have traditionally been used for transportation and farming in India, but today many are being replaced by modern technology. Still, people from all over the world traveled to the annual Pushkar Camel Fair to buy and trade animals, take part in competitions, and enjoy cultural performances.

A camel at the fair

GETTY IMAGES (6); ALAMY; BRIAN WORLEY/WWW.P4PICT; SHUTTERSTOCK (2)

A rendering of the project

Saudi Arabia
Megacity scaled down

Plans for a 100-mile-long city in Saudi Arabia will be scaled back because it has become too costly to build. Neom was to be a city of the future, without roads or cars, and would run on renewable power (energy created by nature that does not run out). Experts now say the city will be smaller than originally planned, if it's completed at all.

Wu Fei (right) and his crew

China
Youngest astronaut blasts off

On October 31, China sent its youngest-ever astronaut into space. Wu Fei, age 32, was part of the three-person crew that launched in a Shenzhou rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center to the Chinese space station, Tiangong. The team will spend six months on the station, taking over from another crew of astronauts. Also along for the ride were four mice, which will be studied to see how weightlessness affects their behavior.

A flooded street

Philippines
Super typhoon strikes

Typhoon Fung-wong made landfall in the Philippines on November 9. The tropical storm, which was classified as a super typhoon, brought heavy rain and winds of up to 115 miles per hour. It was the second typhoon to hit the country this month. At least 18 people were killed and millions were evacuated. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. declared a state of emergency after the storm caused flooding, mudslides, and power outages.

A kārearea

Wellington, New Zealand
Bird of the Year needs space

Since being named the nation's Bird of the Year in September, kāreareas, also called New Zealand falcons, have been swooping down toward walkers who go near their nests. As a result, the Hutt City Council has asked people to stay clear of the birds. The 5,000 to 8,000 kāreareas left in the wild are threatened by the destruction of their habitats.

Thailand
New refugee rules

New rules allowing refugees (people forced to flee their home to escape danger) to legally work in Thailand have taken effect. About 87,000 refugees live in nine camps along Thailand's border with Myanmar, where a war is taking place. Supporters of the Thai government's decision say it will help employers fill job openings while allowing the refugees to support themselves and their families.

A refugee harvesting crops

Should naps be allowed at school?

Some people say students would benefit from a little daytime shut-eye.

What you need to know

- **According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, children ages 6 to 12 need between 9 and 12 hours of sleep per night. Teenagers need 8 to 10 hours.**
- **Lack of sleep can affect kids' health, happiness, and learning ability.**
- **A 2024 study by the National Sleep Foundation found that about 8 out of 10 teenagers don't get enough sleep.**
- **Power naps (10 to 30 minutes) are shown to provide an energy boost and increase mental alertness.**

Most kids stop napping in school when they're very young, but some older students are having a snooze too. In recent years, high schools in New Mexico installed napping pods—reclining chairs with a pull-down shade and soft music—and colleges across the US have done the same. Teachers and students have also started nap clubs. In China, where elementary and middle school students often nap midday, a study of nearly 3,000 kids ages 10 to 12 found a link between napping and improved mood, behavior, and academic performance. Some people say students don't need to rest, however. What do you think? Should naps be allowed at school?

Yes—naps help body and mind

The school day is busy, with plenty of noise, social interaction, and learning. That can be draining! A nap in the middle of the day would give kids a moment of quiet and calm and let them reboot. That boosts emotional health, lowers stress levels, and improves mood. Power naps also help kids stay alert and focused during the day. They will learn more, remember the material, and improve their academic performance. Besides boosting brains, sleep is necessary for bodies to grow. When you sleep, your body releases human growth hormone, which kids need to build muscle, repair tissue, and strengthen the immune system.

No—school is not the place

School is for learning, not sleeping! There are only so many hours in a school day, and teachers have a lot of material to get through. Adding in nap time will take away from an academic subject, like math, science, or writing. And there's no convenient place for students to nap at school. Classrooms aren't designed to be comfortable, quiet places. Would students sleep sitting up in a desk chair? Besides, nothing can take the place of a good night's sleep. Napping at school is not a replacement for that and could even throw off kids' sleep schedules. What if they aren't tired at night because they napped at school?

YES Three reasons naps should be allowed at school

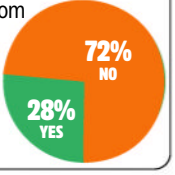
1. **A nap offers a moment of calm in the middle of a hectic day.**
2. **Short naps relieve stress and boost mood, alertness, memory, and academic performance.**
3. **Sleep isn't just good for brains—it's important for bodies, too, and helps kids grow, get stronger, and stay healthy.**

NO Three reasons naps should not be allowed at school

1. **The school day is already jam-packed, and nap time would take away from instructional time.**
2. **School buildings and facilities aren't equipped to accommodate sleeping kids.**
3. **Naps at school cannot replace getting a good night's sleep and could even mess up kids' sleep patterns.**

LAST WEEK'S POLL

Last week, we asked you if we should eat lab-grown meat. Most of you voted against consuming meat made from animal cells: 72% said no, and 28% said yes.



What do you think?

Now that you've read a bit more about this issue, visit kids.theweekjunior.com/polls so you can vote in our debate. Vote YES if you think naps should be allowed at school or NO if you don't. We'll publish the results next week.

The goal of the big debate is to present two sides of an issue fairly in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on this page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties.

GETTY IMAGES

Expression through art

Photographer Tawny Chatmon's work is being honored in a major show.

Tawny Chatmon is a photographer who adds layers of color and texture to her portraits to celebrate Black culture. Now she has gotten her first-ever museum solo exhibition, titled *Tawny Chatmon: Sanctuaries of Truth, Dissolution of Lies*, at the National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA) in Washington, DC. It is on view through March 8.

Chatmon's portraits often feature Black children and families, including her own. She combines photography and painting, using gold details to symbolize larger themes such as beauty and justice. She has cited mosaics from the Byzantine era (324–1453) and paintings by the Austrian artist Gustav Klimt (1862–1918) as inspirations. Her work has been shown around the world, including at the Venice Biennale in Italy, the Minneapolis Institute of Art in Minnesota, and other museums.

I Never Asked You to Worship Me (2020)

Born in Japan, Chatmon grew up in a military family before settling in Maryland. As a child, she loved making collages and tiny books and using computer programs like Microsoft Paint. She later worked as a photographer. When her father became ill with cancer in 2010, she made a photo series about his life. "My work became a way to respond to what troubled me," she told *The Week Junior*.

The NMWA exhibition features more than 25 large-scale photographs and mixed-media works. Using photography and embroidery, Chatmon explores identity and history. She hopes her work will inspire visitors to pass down stories and keep seeking the truth.

To aspiring artists, Chatmon says, start now. "Don't wait for the perfect moment or the best supplies," she told *The Week Junior*. "Try new things and make mistakes."

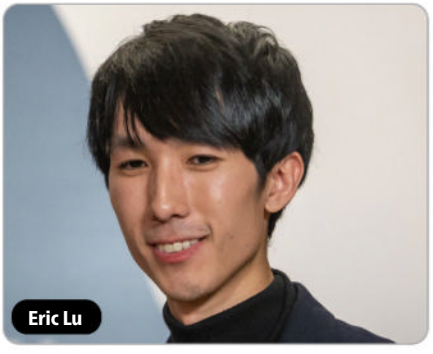
Tawny Chatmon

DID YOU KNOW?
In 1975, Ming Smith became the first Black female photographer to have her work acquired by a major US museum.

Taking the top job

Educator Sal Khan was recently named "Vision Steward" of TED, the nonprofit organization known for its famous TED Talk videos. Khan is the founder and CEO of Khan Academy, which offers free online tutoring lessons in more than 50 languages to over 170 million users. He is TED's first new leader in 25 years. In his role, he will shape TED's long-term strategy while continuing to run Khan Academy. He said he is honored and excited to "further empower people everywhere to learn, connect, and collaborate for a better future."

Sal Khan



Eric Lu

Pianist makes history

Eric Lu, age 27, has earned the top prize at the International Chopin Piano Competition in Poland, becoming the first American since 1970 to win. Known as the "Olympics of classical music," the contest is held every five years. Lu, who is from Massachusetts, has performed with major orchestras in Boston and London and has appeared in top concert halls worldwide. He outperformed 640 applicants, and played Frédéric Chopin's "Polonaise-Fantasy, Op. 61" in the final round. Lu thanked "all the Chopin lovers around the world" after his win. "This is a dream come true," he said.

OVERHEARD

"The people who are going to love you for you are the ones who are going to love you for being yourself."

Kenzi Richardson, star of *Vampirina: Teenage Vampire*, on the message behind the new series in the *Vampirina* franchise

GETTY IMAGES (4); GALERIE MYRTIS

SUN POWER
Solar energy has been the world's fastest-growing method of making electricity for 20 years in a row.

Wind turbines and solar panels

The rise of electric cars

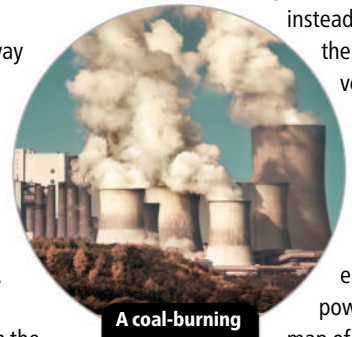
Electric vehicle sales reached a record high in September, according to the research firm Rho Motion. Worldwide, 2.1 million electric cars and trucks were sold—26% more than in September 2024. About 1.3 million were sold in China, while US consumers bought 215,000.

A car charging

Renewable energy overtakes coal

A report from Ember, a research group, found that in the first half of 2025, renewable energy produced more electricity than coal did across the world. Renewable energy comes from natural sources that don't run out, such as the Sun or wind.

Coal has been the main way to make electricity on Earth for more than 100 years. Formed over millions of years from dead plant matter, the black lumps are burned in power stations to heat water and create steam. This turns structures called turbines, and the energy from the movement is turned into electricity.



A coal-burning power plant

When coal is burned, it releases gases including carbon dioxide, which contributes to climate change. Scientists say humans must reduce their use of fossil fuels, such as coal, oil, and gas, in order to stop climate change from getting worse. One step people are taking is using electric vehicles (see box above) instead of cars fueled by gas. But if the electricity used to charge the vehicles is still generated from coal, it will not be beneficial to the planet.

In the report, researchers looked at how 88 countries, which use 93% of the world's electricity, generate their power. The team also created a map of electricity production. They found that renewable energy grew to 34.3% of the world's electricity sources, while coal dropped to 33.1%. This was mainly because China and India, two of the biggest users of electricity, both used less coal than they did in the previous year.

In the US, however, growing demand for electricity led to more fossil fuels being used in 2025. In parts of Europe, months without windy weather to generate wind power also led to more coal and gas being used to produce electricity. Around the world, the demand for electricity increases every year, so companies need to build new power plants. The report found that, overall, solar and wind power were able to generate enough electricity to meet the new demand.

"We are seeing the first signs of a crucial turning point," said Malgorzata Wiatros-Motyka from Ember. "Solar and wind are now growing fast enough to meet the world's growing appetite for electricity."

PLACE OF THE WEEK

Kenai Fjords National Park, Alaska

The Kenai Fjords are located in the southern part of Alaska. (A fjord is a narrow inlet of the sea between cliffs or steep slopes.) The mountains, glaciers, and waterways were created hundreds of thousands of years ago. The Sugpiaq people, one of eight Alaska Native peoples, lived on the land long before the area became part of the state of Alaska. Nearly 40 glaciers make up the icy landscape. Lynx, hoary marmots, mink, meadow jumping mice, northern bog lemmings, and porcupines roam the forests and mountains, thriving in the chilly climate.

A lynx

A green sea turtle

A comeback for green turtles

The number of green sea turtles in the wild has increased thanks to years of efforts to protect the species. This news was revealed when conservationists gathered in the United Arab Emirates last month.

The meeting was organized by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), a group of experts and leaders who produce a "Red List" recording the extinction risk of animals and plants. Green turtles were previously classified as "endangered" after people captured many of the animals for their meat, eggs, and shells. Construction had also destroyed many of the beaches where they nest, and some turtles had gotten trapped in fishing gear.

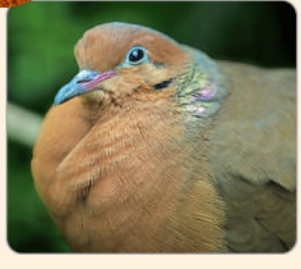
Now the species has been moved to the lower-risk category of "least concern." Their numbers have increased by 28% since the 1970s due to conservation work. Efforts have included releasing baby turtles into the sea, protecting eggs, and teaching people not to hunt the animals. The head of the IUCN, Grethel Aguilar, said the green turtles' recovery "reminds us that conservation works when we act with determination."

Animal of the week: South American tapir

Whipsnade Zoo in England recently welcomed an 11-year-old South American tapir named Anna. Although they look like pigs with long snouts, tapirs are more closely related to horses and rhinos. They whistle, shriek, click, and snort.

- **LIFESPAN:** About 35 years
- **HABITAT:** Cloud forests, grasslands, and swamps
- **SIZE:** Up to 8 feet, 2 inches long and 710 pounds
- **DIET:** Mainly leaves, fruit, twigs, and plants
- **FUN FACT:** Tapirs use their snouts like a snorkel to breathe while swimming underwater.

Good week / Bad week



Socorro doves

Nine Socorro dove chicks have hatched at two major UK zoos this year, offering hope for a species that has been extinct in the wild since 1972. Experts plan to reintroduce the doves to their native Socorro Island in the Pacific Ocean, near Mexico.

Black rhinos in Namibia

A huge fire has burned through one third of Namibia's Etosha National Park. The blaze damaged nearly 3,000 square miles of grass, plants, and trees, endangering the 114 mammal species that live there, including rare black rhinos (above).

Ask an expert: "Why do beluga whales have a hump on their head?"

Cora, 9, Tennessee

Mandy Keogh
Assistant professor of wildlife biology, Bemidji State University

The hump on a beluga whale's head is called a "melon" and is made up of fat tissue. Beluga whales produce high-frequency clicking sounds to communicate with each other and to find food in a process called echolocation. The melon helps project the sound into the water.

Do you have a question for an animal expert? Send it to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Find out more about Bemidji State University at bemidjistate.edu.

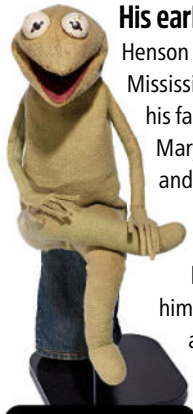
GETTY IMAGES (4); ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (5)

A world made of magic

Jim Henson was a famous puppeteer who brought us the Muppets.

A love of creating that began in childhood led Jim Henson to building a universe of characters beloved by generations.

His early life



The original Kermit

Henson was born in 1936 in Greenville, Mississippi. When he was in fifth grade, his family moved to Hyattsville, Maryland. He was interested in art and was close to his grandmother, who was a painter, quilter, and needleworker. She supported his interests and encouraged him to use his imagination. Henson attended the University of Maryland, where he met his future wife, Jane Nebel. Together, in 1955, they created *Sam and Friends,* a five-minute puppet show with music and humor, for local television. The show led to the development of a group of puppet characters Henson called Muppets. They included an early version of a frog puppet, which he named Kermit.

Behind the scenes of *Sesame Street*

Finding his way

After college, Henson continued to work in TV, with his Muppets appearing in commercials and on variety shows. He formed working relationships with other puppeteers, including Frank Oz. In the late 1960s, Henson was asked to create characters for a new show called *Sesame Street*, which would premiere in 1969. The first characters were Big Bird, Bert and Ernie, Cookie Monster, Grover, and Oscar the Grouch.

WORD PLAY
Jim Henson coined the term "Muppet" by blending the words "marionette" and "puppet."

"When I was young, my ambition was to be one of the people who made a difference in this world," Jim Henson said.

5 famous creations

Big Bird

This 8-foot-2-inch Muppet is a giant yellow bird who is about 6½ years old. He's known for his sensitive side and childlike innocence.

Oscar the Grouch

The most famous garbage can on Sesame Street is the home of Oscar, who was originally orange and has a deep love of trash along with all things dirty and stinky.

EVERETT COLLECTION; COURTESY THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY; GETTY IMAGES (4); SHUTTERSTOCK (2); ALAMY (2)

and imagination

FUN FACT
Jim Henson was also the voice of several Muppets he created, such as Kermit the Frog, Ernie, and Rowlf the Dog.

CREATIVE JOURNEY
Jim Henson Idea Man, a 2024 documentary film about the puppeteer's life, won five Emmy Awards.

Diana Ross on *The Muppet Show*

Achieving fame

After the success of *Sesame Street*, Henson looked to expand his reach to adults. He created *The Muppet Show*, a variety sketch comedy that premiered in 1976 and ran for five seasons. It featured celebrity guests like Diana Ross, Julie Andrews, and Elton John alongside new Muppets such as Miss Piggy, Fozzie Bear, and Gonzo. The Muppets also starred in six films, starting with *The Muppet Movie* in 1979. Henson made other films, too, including *The Dark Crystal* and *Labyrinth*, which featured animatronic puppets. In the 1980s, he developed TV series like *Fraggle Rock* and *Muppet Babies*. During Henson's career, the Jim Henson Company (which began as Muppets, Inc.) won more than 50 Emmy Awards.

Sabrina Carpenter

Lasting legacy

Henson worked until his death in 1990 at age 53. Several new Muppet movies have since been produced, including *Muppets Most Wanted* in 2014 and *The Muppets Mayhem* in 2023. The Jim Henson Company remains a leader in family entertainment, while the Jim Henson Foundation supports puppet artistry through grants and events. The Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta, Georgia, and The Museum of the Moving Image in New York City feature exhibits dedicated to Henson. Season 56 of *Sesame Street* premieres on Netflix and PBS stations this month. And in 2026, *The Muppet Show* will return for one special episode, guest-starring Sabrina Carpenter.

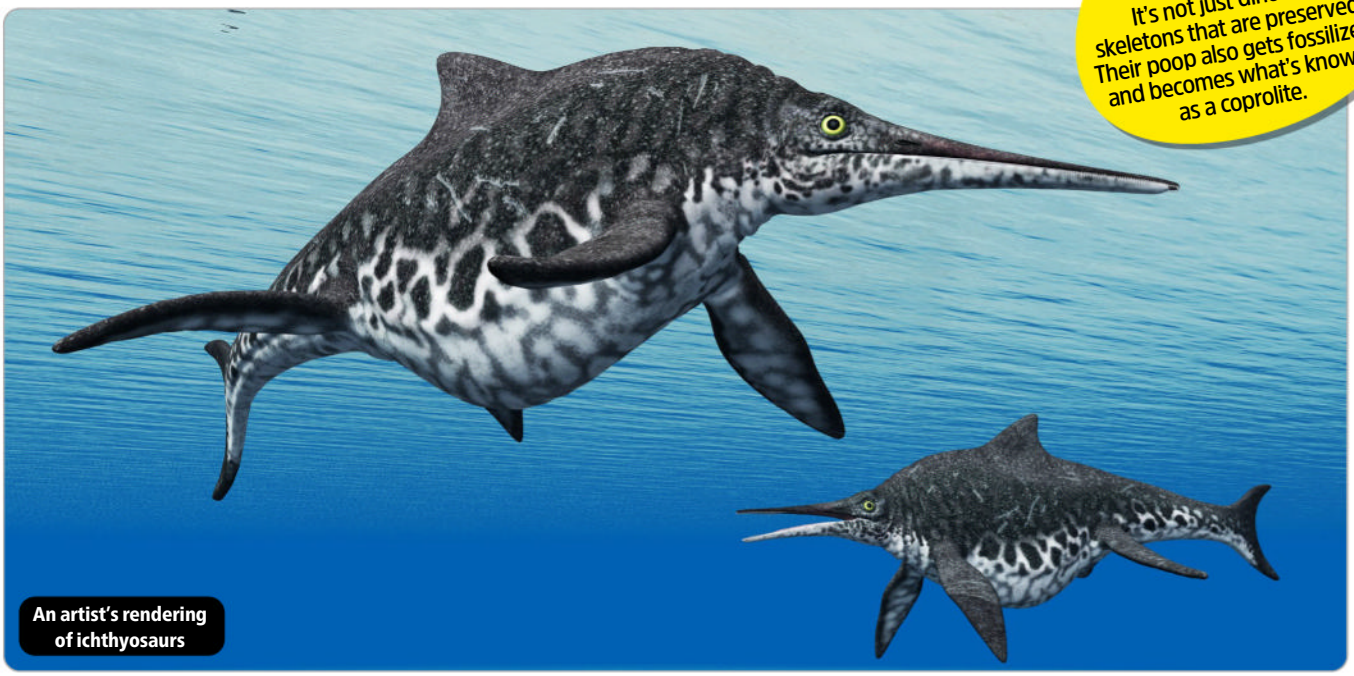
Cookie Monster

Blue, furry, and googly-eyed, Cookie Monster is best known for his enthusiasm for eating. He sings about his favorite treat in the song "C Is for Cookie."

Bert and Ernie

These best friends have been roommates at 123 Sesame Street since the first episode. Their opposite personalities show how people can be very different yet still remain friends.

DINO DROPPINGS
It's not just dinosaur skeletons that are preserved. Their poop also gets fossilized and becomes what's known as a coprolite.



An artist's rendering of ichthyosaurs

Rare "sword dragon" identified

A 185-million-year-old fossil found on the south coast of England, in the UK, has been identified as a new species of ichthyosaur. The fossil was discovered in Dorset, in an area known as the Jurassic Coast, where many fossils have been found over hundreds of years.

Ichthyosaurs were a type of prehistoric marine reptile. They were dangerous predators and lived in the waters that covered much of what is now Europe millions of years ago. They had long, thin jaws with many teeth, which they used to catch prey including octopuses and cuttlefish.

The newly identified fossil

The fossil was discovered in 2001 at Golden Cap, a hill in Dorset overlooking the sea, and taken to the Royal Ontario Museum in Canada. Scientists studied it for years but only recently identified it as a new species of ichthyosaur, which they named Xiphodracon goldencapensis. That means "sword dragon of Golden Cap."

Dean Lomax is a paleontologist (scientist who studies the past through fossils) and ichthyosaur expert who led the recent research. Lomax said, "Xiphodracon translates to sword-like dragon, and that is in reference to that very long, sword-like snout, but also the fact that ichthyosaurs have been referred to as sea dragons for about 200 years."

Xiphodracon goldencapensis is believed to have lived during the early Jurassic period, which makes it very rare. Not many ichthyosaur fossils have ever been found from that period, and this is the only one of its kind that has been discovered.

The scientists can tell from the fossil that the sea creature had an enormous eye socket and a very long snout. They believe the marine reptile would have been nearly 10 feet long, which is about the same size as a bottlenose dolphin. Xiphodracon goldencapensis also had features that have never been seen in an ichthyosaur before, including a bone around the nostril with prong-like structures, called a lacrimal.

The skeleton also offered clues to how the marine reptile could have died all those millions of years ago. There is evidence that the creature's skull was bitten by a much larger predator. Study co-author Erin Maxwell, from the Stuttgart State Museum of Natural History in Germany, said, "Life in the Mesozoic oceans was a dangerous prospect." The Mesozoic era includes three periods: the Triassic, Jurassic, and Cretaceous.

A top predator

Joaquinraptor casali

The fossil of a newly identified dinosaur was found with the leg bone of an ancient crocodile locked in its jaws. About 23 feet long and weighing more than 2,200 pounds, Joaquinraptor casali was a fast-moving hunter with powerful "claws like hedge trimmers," according to the scientists who discovered it. Its well-preserved remains, including much of its skull, ribs, vertebrae, and fore and hind limbs, were discovered in Patagonia, Argentina.

J. casali was likely the top predator in its area. It was a type of theropod dinosaur known as a megaraptor (which means "large thief"). Megaraptors lived in the late stages of the Cretaceous period, between about 70 million and 66 million years ago, across South America, Asia, and Australia. They were carnivores with elongated skulls, powerful arms, and big claws.

Treatment offers hope for brain disease

A team of scientists in the Netherlands said they have developed a therapy that can slow down Huntington's disease, which affects the brain and has no cure. It is named after George Huntington, an American who wrote about the disease more than 150 years ago.

Huntington's disease affects people's movement, thinking, and emotions. About 41,000 people in the US have it, and more than 200,000 are at risk of developing it.

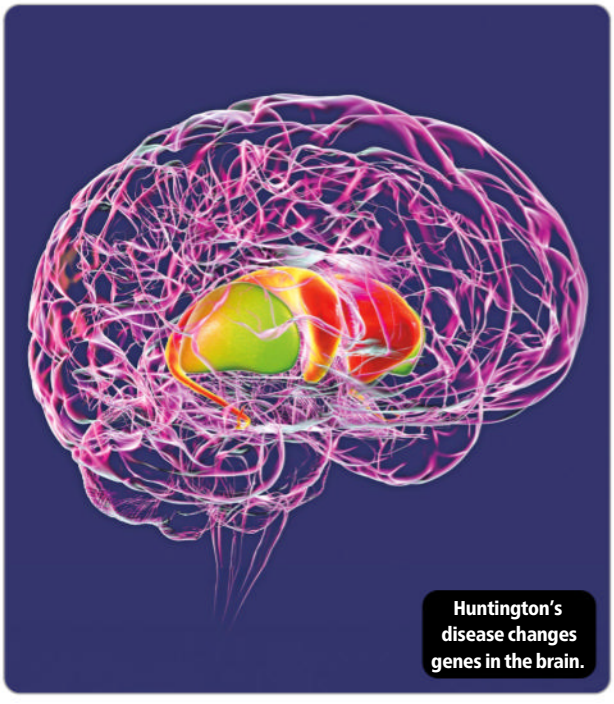
YOUNG SCIENTIST
George Huntington was 22 years old when he first identified Huntington's disease in adults.

The cause of Huntington's disease is an accidental change in one gene, called the huntingtin gene. Genes are short sections of DNA, which are chemicals that contain the instructions on how a person will develop and grow. The change in the huntingtin gene progressively damages the brain.

A company called uniQure created a gene therapy that slowed the progress of the disease. A single dose of the treatment, called AMT-130, was injected into the brains of 29 patients during a 12- to 18-hour surgery. AMT-130 introduced a new piece of DNA into their cells.

Scientists tracked the patients' ability to think, move, and walk over three years and found that the treatment slowed the disease by 75%. "This result changes everything," said Ed Wild, an author of the study.

The findings will be reviewed to ensure the treatment is safe, and uniQure hopes to have it approved for more patients in the near future.



Huntington's disease changes genes in the brain.

An illustration of a "will-o'-the-wisp" light

"Ghostly" lights have scientific cause

For hundreds of years, people have reported seeing flashes of light near swamps or other wetlands. The lights have many names, including "will-o'-the-wisp." Legend has it that they're the work of spirits or fairies.

Scientists, however, believed the lights were caused by gases, like methane, that are released from the water. But until recently, no one could pinpoint what made it happen.

Researchers at Stanford University in California may have found the answer. They pumped tiny methane and air bubbles through water to imitate gas seeping from a swamp. They used high-speed cameras to capture what happened when the bubbles moved through the water.

When some bubbles interacted with others, they generated sparks of electricity that the team called "microlightning." The sparks were powerful enough to ignite the methane, creating the glowing lights that people have seen for so long.

AMAZING INVENTION

Yogurt that's made from ants

The yogurt

Researchers re-created an ancient recipe once used in Turkey and Bulgaria —yogurt made with ants. To create it, they dropped four ants into a jar of warm milk. By the next day, the liquid had begun to thicken and sour, which is an early stage of yogurt fermentation.

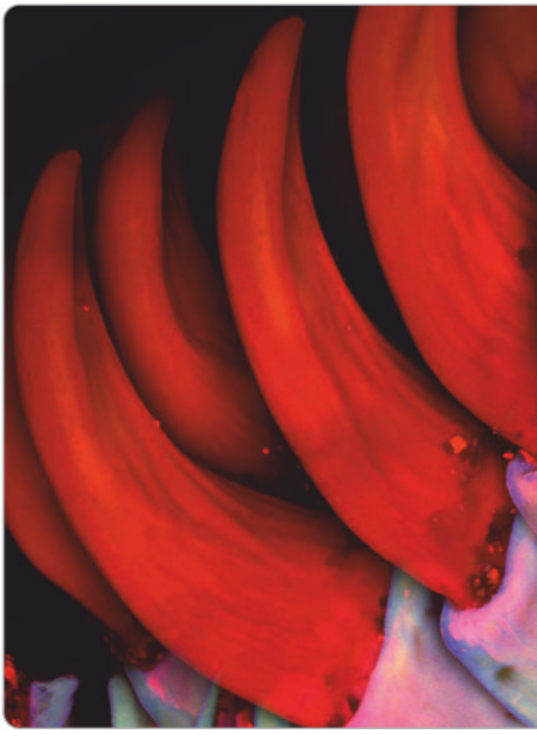
The fermentation process typically starts when bacteria are introduced into milk. In this case, the ants carry the bacteria, as well as other substances, that get the milk to thicken and change its texture. Don't try this at home, though. Ants can carry harmful bacteria too.

SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY: GETTY IMAGES; DAVID ZILBER. AND D-F BY SØREN GAMMELMARK AND KÅRE KNUDSEN OF RESTAURANT ALCHEMIST; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES; ANDREW MCAFEE/CARNEGIE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY; DEAN LO MAX, JUDY MASSARE, AND ERIN MAXWELL

Photos of the week

2025 NIKON SMALL WORLD COMPETITION FINALISTS

Seeing green
Jan Rosenboom captured this close-up of algae in a water droplet.

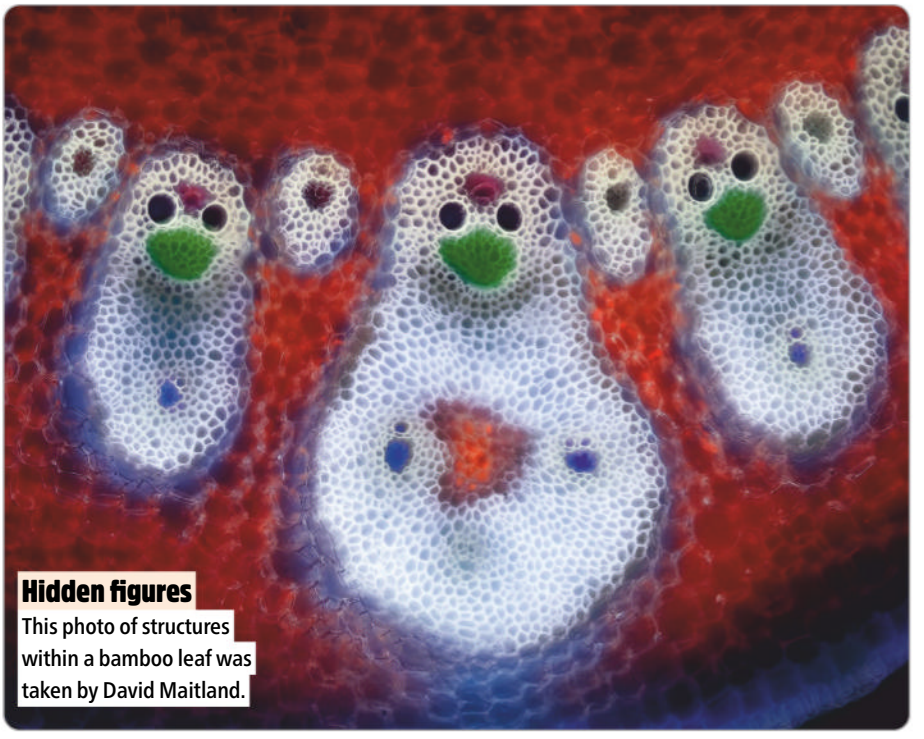


Zooming in
Using a magnifying camera, Igor Siwanowicz captured the spores of a small tropical fern.

JAN ROSENBOOM; IGOR SIWANOWICZ; EDUARDO CARRASCO; KENDALL MYERS; DAVID MAITLAND; DOONG YIEN

Photos of the week

Get a grip
Kendall Myers shot this image of the hook-like crochets that help a moth larva move.



Hidden figures
This photo of structures within a bamboo leaf was taken by David Maitland.

Bugging out
A fungus grows from the body of a fly in this picture by Eduardo Carrasco.

Colorful view
Using polarized light, Doong Yien took this photo of crystallized acids.

Arizona vs. Florida

NEW LEAGUE
Project B, an international pro women's basketball league, is expected to launch in November 2026.

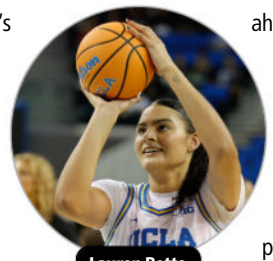
Player sets record

On November 6, Florida's Olivier Rioux (above left) became the tallest basketball player to play in an NCAA game. The freshman from Canada is 7-foot-9, and he drew huge cheers when he checked into the game. Rioux, age 19, also holds the record as the world's tallest teen.

College basketball gets started

The 2025–26 NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) basketball season began on November 3. At the start, the top-ranked women's team was UConn (University of Connecticut), the defending national champions. Purdue University was the number one men's team. Last season's men's champions, the University of Florida, were ranked third.

The women's season started with two games played in Paris, France. In one of them, 16th-ranked Baylor University upset seventh-ranked Duke University, 58–52. Baylor allowed Duke to score only 19 points in the second half. The next day, UConn began its title defense with a 79–66 win over 20th-ranked University of Louisville. Meanwhile, ninth-ranked NC State (North Carolina State University) beat eighth-ranked University of Tennessee, 80–77. On November 9, NC State met 18th-ranked USC (University of Southern California) in another tight contest. NC State began the fourth quarter ahead by eight points, but USC came back and won, 69–68.


Lauren Betts

Women's players to watch this season include Sarah Strong of UConn and Lauren Betts of UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles). Betts could be the top pick in the 2026 WNBA (Women's National Basketball Association) draft.

In men's opening night action, Florida played 13th-ranked University of Arizona and lost in a 93–87 upset. Arizona's Koa Peat and Jaden Bradley had a combined 57 points. In another game, eighth-ranked Brigham Young University beat Villanova University, 71–66. They were led by freshman AJ Dybantsa, who is expected to be a top pick in next year's NBA (National Basketball Association) draft. He scored 21 points in the win.

In a thrilling November 7 game that was a rematch of the 2022 national championship, 25th-ranked UNC (University of North Carolina) hosted 19th-ranked University of Kansas. UNC got off to a slow start but scored 58 points in the second half on their way to an 87–74 win. The same day, Purdue won its second game of the season, an 87–77 victory over unranked Oakland.

An exciting game on November 8 featured 15th-ranked University of Alabama and fifth-ranked St. John's University. Alabama won, 103–96, with an offensive showcase led by Labaron Philon Jr., who scored 25 points.

THIS WEEK'S WINNERS...

SOCCER

In a shocking upset in the quarterfinals of the NWSL (National Women's Soccer League) playoffs on November 9, eighth-seeded NJ/NY Gotham FC eliminated the top-seeded Kansas City Current with a 2–1 victory in extra time. Katie Stengel scored the winning goal for Gotham in the 121st minute. The Current had one of the best regular seasons in NWSL history and had lost only three matches this year.

NJ/NY Gotham FC

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

On November 8, Indiana University visited Penn State and defeated them, 27–24, with an 80-yard game-winning touchdown drive. The win extended Indiana's record to 10–0 this season.

TRAMPOLINE GYMNASTICS

At the World Championships on November 9, Ruben Padilla won the silver medal in the individual trampoline event. He is the first US man to medal in the event since

TRICKY TERM
The sports term "hat trick" was first used in cricket after a player was rewarded with a hat for making three great plays.

Members of the US Women's National Team

Big US wins in Rivalry Series

The women's ice hockey national teams from the US and Canada have begun their 2025 Rivalry Series, a set of exhibition games. The first two games were played on November 6 and November 8 in the US, and the final two will take place in December in Canada.

This is the sixth edition of the Rivalry Series, and Canada has been the overall winner four times. The US is looking to win its first Rivalry Series since the 2019–20 event. Team USA is ranked number one in the world, and Team Canada is number two. They are both expected to compete for gold at the Olympics in February.

Game 1 of this year's series was played in Cleveland, Ohio, and Team USA won, 4–1. Canada scored the first goal midway through the first period, but US forward Taylor Heise tied up the score 16 seconds later. Forward Abbey Murphy later scored a hat trick (three goals) for the US. Team USA goaltender Aerin Frankel had a strong performance and saved 25 of 26 shots she faced.

The teams traveled to Buffalo, New York, for Game 2, which Team USA won, 6–1. US star Hilary Knight led a well-balanced offensive attack and scored her own hat trick in the game. Defender Laila Edwards also played a key role in the win, scoring one goal and adding two assists. Gwyneth Philips was the goaltender for Team USA and saved 29 shots in the game.

Many of the players on both national teams, including Knight, Phillips, Heise, and Frankel, also play for teams in the PWHL (Professional Women's Hockey League), which begins its third season on November 21.

COACH OF THE WEEK

Coach's Name: **Ryan O'Connor**

Team: **Red Stick School of Fencing**

"Coach Ryan is such a great coach and fencer. He is really patient and doesn't mind showing us practice moves more than once. He makes dad jokes and gives great video game advice. Coach is engaging and gives us good information on upcoming tournaments. He teaches back-to-back classes with different age groups and motivates all of us to do our best. Coach Ryan knows how to make us laugh, get us moving, and help us learn." Julian, 12, Louisiana

To nominate a Coach of the Week, send your coach's name, photo, sport, and team to *hello@theweekjunior.com.* Include your name, age, state, and a few reasons why your coach is great.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

Logan Garnica

AGE: 21 TEAM: UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
SPORT: CROSS COUNTRY/TRACK AND FIELD

Family sport Growing up, both of my parents did marathons, so I was around the long-distance running scene. Once my brothers got to junior high age, they joined the cross country team. Seeing them excel motivated me to try the sport, and I fell in love with it. Running fast is a great feeling, and getting stronger every day is really motivating. Also, teammate relationships kept me coming back every season.

Big payoff My freshman year, I decided to try the steeplechase event. I had no idea if I'd excel in it. I pushed through a rocky season and found my bearings. I'm proud of that and I'm glad I stuck with it. Last season, I broke the school record in the 3,000-meter steeplechase.

Staying fit I run a total of about 80 to 85 miles a week. Running definitely keeps you in shape, but I love to try other things. My roommates and I play a lot of pickleball.

Getting set At a meet, finding a familiar face in the crowd along the start line helps calm my nerves. I'm lucky my parents make it to most of my races.

Strength training I'm coming back from a bit of an injury that held me back from performing the way I wanted to toward our last postseason. Still, I was able to get through the races, however tough they were. I saw that as a learning experience and an opportunity to get mentally stronger.

Wise words You might not be a varsity player the first time you start a sport, but stick with it and it'll pay you back. If you don't get that much better, you'll at least make friends while you're doing it.

GETTY IMAGES; UTAH STATE ATHLETICS (2); ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (4)

SPECIAL ADDITIONS
Wicked: For Good features two brand-new songs: "No Place Like Home" and "The Girl in the Bubble."

Wicked: For Good

The return of beloved witches

***Wicked: For Good* is the second part of the film adaptation of a popular Broadway musical.**

Last November, the first part of the big-screen adaptation of the musical *Wicked* arrived in movie theaters, where it wowed audiences and broke box office records. Ever since, fans have been eagerly awaiting part two, *Wicked: For Good*, to see the dramatic story conclude. The film will hit theaters on November 21.

Wicked is based on the novel *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*. It reimagines the land of Oz from the classic book *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and takes place before the events of that story and the classic film adaptation. *Wicked* is about green outcast Elphaba (played by Cynthia Erivo), who becomes known as the Wicked Witch of the West, and popular Glinda (Ariana Grande), who is considered a Good Witch. The first film followed the pair as they form a friendship and meet the surprisingly sinister Wizard.

Nathan Crowley

For Good picks up about four years after the first film. Elphaba is on the run and fighting to protect animals from enslavement. Meanwhile, Glinda is working for the Wizard in Emerald City, where she realizes she has to give up her dream life "to become a better person and save Oz—and try to save her friend," production designer Nathan Crowley told *The Week Junior*. Crowley's beautiful *Wicked* sets earned him an Academy Award, and he also worked on *For Good*, which features Glinda's glamorous apartment, Elphaba's forest hideout that was built with woven tree branches, and a Yellow Brick Road made from 1 million tulips.

For Good explains the origins of the Tin Man, Cowardly Lion, Scarecrow, and Wicked Witch of the East from *The Wizard of Oz*. Still, the heart of the story is about the witches' sacrifices and what director Jon M. Chu said are "the hard questions that come when you are alone, fighting for justice."

3 *Wicked* record breakers

Stage smash

The musical opened on Broadway in 2003 (above). It made history by becoming the first show to earn more than $5 million in a single week. It led the Broadway box office for nine years and has earned more than $1 billion.

Big-screen bonanza

In 2024, the film *Wicked* had the biggest opening weekend ever for a Broadway musical adaptation. It was also the highest-grossing musical movie worldwide and the year's highest-grossing film that was not a sequel.

Standout music

When the *Wicked* film soundtrack was released last November, it had the best-ever debut for a musical adaptation on the Billboard 200 (a ranking of albums' popularity). *Wicked* also had the best first-week sales of any theatrical film soundtrack in the 2020s.

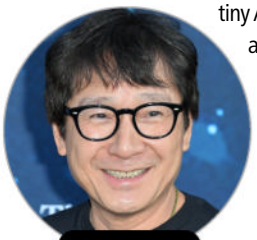
SPEEDY SLITHERERS
Black mamba snakes are able to move as fast as 12 miles per hour in short bursts.

Zootopia 2

Zootopia 2 coming to theaters

Nearly nine years after Disney's *Zootopia* won the Academy Award for best animated feature film, a sequel is heading to movie theaters. *Zootopia 2* continues the story of idealistic rabbit Judy Hopps and scam artist fox Nick Wilde as they work together in a city where predators and prey live in harmony. It will be released on November 26.

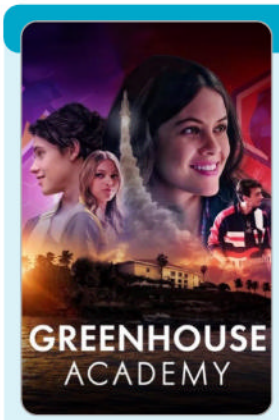
All of Zootopia's animals are mammals, and Byron Howard, a director of both films, told *The Week Junior* that he and writer-director Jared Bush thought about where the reptiles existed in that on-screen world. The question gets answered in the new film after Nick and Judy encounter a pit viper, Gary De'Snake (voiced by Academy Award winner Ke Huy Quan). He is trying to bring his family back to Zootopia, where no one has seen a snake for 100 years. In real life, pit vipers come in many colors, and Howard said Gary was designed to be blue so he stands out against the mammals in Zootopia.


Ke Huy Quan

The first film had more than 60 different species on screen, and this one has even more. Dr. Fuzzby, a comforting therapist, is a quokka, a tiny Australian wallaby. She helps Judy and Nick work on their relationship, and the species was chosen for the role "because they have a natural little smile," Howard said. Another animal with a key part is a basilisk, a reptile that runs on water.

A big theme of the film is learning to accept others' differences. It applies to the mammals and reptiles as well as Nick and Judy. Differences are "important and valuable," Howard said. "Even though it can seem like an obstacle at first, it can actually be a huge opportunity and make things much, much better."

READER RECOMMENDS



Greenhouse Academy *(Netflix)*
"This super-exciting show is about a family of four: dad Carter, mom Ryan, and their kids, Alex and Hayley. Ryan is an astronaut, but sadly, someone sabotages her rocket and she doesn't make it back from space. After that, Alex and Hayley are sent to Greenhouse Academy, a boarding school. They are split into houses that often compete but sometimes have to work together. They make friends and enemies, and things get really wild as the story unfolds. The show has action, comedy, romance, mystery, and cliff-hangers at the end of almost every episode." Saahil, 14, California

Do you have a film or TV show to recommend to other kids? Send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

THIS WEEK'S WATCH LIST

Jurassic World: Chaos Theory
(Netflix)
The final season of this *Jurassic World: Camp Cretaceous* sequel series continues to follow a group of adults who were trapped on a dinosaur-filled island as kids. They've uncovered a global scheme by a genetics company and must stop its dangerous experiments for good.

The Family Plan 2
(Apple TV+)
In the 2023 action film *The Family Plan*, former government spy Dan Morgan enjoys a regular life until he unexpectedly has to take his family on the run. In the sequel, a family trip to England turns into chaos when someone from Dan's past seeks revenge. It is rated PG-13.

The Great British Baking Show: Holidays
(Netflix)
A group of bakers compete in holiday-themed challenges in this spin-off of the popular competition series. Watch to see special guests and familiar faces from the show try to impress the judges with festive desserts.

DISNEY; GETTY IMAGES; NETFLIX (2); APPLE TV+; MARK BOURDILLON; ON LEFT PAGE: UNIVERSAL PICTURES (2); GETTY IMAGES (2); REPUBLIC RECORDS

Plants vs. Zombies: Replanted

Battle zombies with plants

Plants vs. Zombies: Replanted is a new tower defense game. It is out now for the Nintendo Switch systems, PlayStation platforms, Xbox consoles, and PC.

The original Plants vs. Zombies was a popular game that was released in 2009. In it, you use plants to defend a house from a zombie invasion led by the evil Dr. Zomboss. There have been award-winning sequels as well as spin-offs, and the game even inspired a series of graphic novels for kids.

Plants vs. Zombies: Replanted is a remastered remake of the original. The premise of the game remains the same, but there are some new elements that include Cloudy Day Mode, which makes it harder for your plants to grow, and Air Raid mode, which has zombies fall from the sky.

Many zombies in the game have special skills and different ways of attacking as they try to move through rows of plants to reach your house. Some can pole vault high in the air and some have extra-strong defenses. Some even dance like pop stars. But the plants are powerful, too. Each has its own special feature to either attack a zombie or slow it down. Planting the right kinds in strategic places is the key to success.

You're led through some of the action by a neighbor named Crazy Dave, who also sells items to help you win the battles.

The new version of the game comes with dramatically upgraded graphics, gameplay with adjustable speed, and fun new minigames. It also has a new multiplayer co-op mode, so you can team up with friends to battle the hungry hordes.

PODCAST OF THE WEEK

HISTORICAL RECORDS

Major podcast platforms

The life stories of lesser-known historic heroes are turned into original hip-hop songs in this podcast created by Story Pirates and the famous drummer and record producer Questlove. Subjects include disability rights advocate Judy Heumann and labor organizer Emma Tenayuca.

GAME OF THE WEEK

BRAWL STARS

Apple App Store, Google Play

Olivia, a 9-year-old reader of *The Week Junior*, recommended this mobile game. Each player controls a Brawler with unique powers, and you battle in groups of three or five or go solo in a showdown. There are several different modes for the action, and you can play against friends online.

CHANNEL OF THE WEEK

READING RAINBOW

youtube.com/user/readingrainbow

The children's series *Reading Rainbow* aired from 1983 to 2006 and inspired a love of reading in millions of viewers. Now it's back as a YouTube series hosted by librarian Mychal Threets. In each episode, he reads new books, leads hands-on projects, and welcomes celebrity guests.

ELECTRONIC ARTS, INC. (2); IHEART PODCASTS; SUPERCELL OY; KIDZUKO VIA YOUTUBE

BOOK OF THE WEEK

Winging It

By Megan Wagner Lloyd and Michelle Mee Nutter

(Graphix)

Despite being named after the beautiful and rare luna moth, 12-year-old Luna considers herself a creature of the indoors. Luna's mom was a nature lover, but she died when Luna was a baby. Luna and her dad live in California, and they see her mom's side of the family once a year. When Luna is about to ask permission to visit Los Angeles with friends, her dad breaks the news that they have to move across the country to a location near Washington, DC, for his job. Until they find a place of their own, they'll live with Luna's maternal grandmother. Soon after Luna and her dad arrive, they visit the National Museum of Natural History, where they spot a framed luna moth near the butterfly exhibit. It ignites Luna's curiosity to see one in real life. Luna's grandmother gives Luna her mom's old nature journals. Although Luna is reluctant to look through the journals at first, they turn out to be the key to helping her adjust to her new life and making peace with the past. This heartwarming graphic novel takes place over the course of a year, with a chapter for each month. *Ages 8–12*

ASK THE AUTHOR

Megan Wagner Lloyd

We spoke to the author of the Book of the Week.

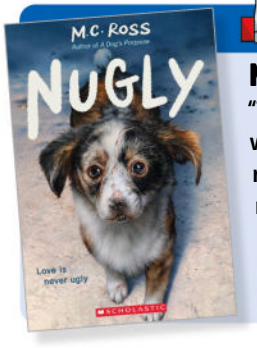
What inspired this book?
When I moved to the East Coast, I learned about the luna moth, which is native to eastern North America. Reading about it helped me realize I would discover amazing things about my new home.

What do you love most about nature?
I love how it reminds me of the beauty in the world every day.

What do you like to do in your spare time?
I enjoy being with my family, reading, and running.

What's your advice on starting a nature journal?
Head outdoors with some paper and something to write with. Bring your curiosity with you, and have fun creating!

Favorite museums in Washington, DC?
The Museum of Natural History—especially the gems and minerals exhibit—and the National Gallery of Art.



READER RECOMMENDS

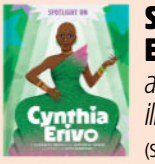
Nugly *By M.C. Ross*

"This story is about a dog named Nugget. He is the cutest puppy, but when he's put up for adoption, he thinks he isn't loved anymore and runs away. After Nugget gets an injury that affects his cuteness, he must find a new purpose in life. He goes on a journey that helps him realize there's more to life than what's on the outside. This book is sweet and good to read when you feel alone." GiannaLei, 9, California

Do you have a book to recommend? Send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

4 books that celebrate the new *Wicked* film

These titles contain amazing photos, stickers, and behind-the-scenes stories.



Spotlight on Cynthia Erivo *By Elizabeth Dennis and Hunter M. Green, illustrated by Ruth Burrows*

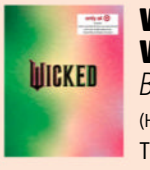
(Simon Spotlight)

Cynthia Erivo plays Elphaba in *Wicked* and *Wicked: For Good*. In this beautifully illustrated biography, you'll discover facts about her rise to fame. For example, the first song she sang onstage was "Silent Night." *Ages 6 and up*

Wickedly Popular Sticker Book *Illustrated by Brooke O'Neill*

(Workman Publishing)

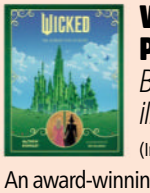
More than 1,100 stickers related to the *Wicked* movies and *The Wizard of Oz* are included in this book. They come in various sizes and can be used to decorate crafts, notebooks, and other objects. Designs include Glinda's gown, magic wands, and the Land of Oz. *Ages 7 and up*



Wicked: The Official Visual Companion *By Universal Pictures*

(HarperCollins)

This hardcover keepsake has more than 300 colorful photos from the filming of *Wicked* and *Wicked: For Good*. It also includes a gorgeous pull-out reversible poster and personal letters to readers from *Wicked* stars Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande. *Ages 12 and up*



Wicked: The Ultimate Pop-Up Book *By Matthew Reinhart, illustrated by Rui Ricardo*

(Insight Editions)

An award-winning paper designer crafted this book's intricate pop-ups that re-create magical moments from *Wicked*. The Emerald City looks especially stunning when it pops up from the page. The book's magnetic spine unfolds and expands into a map of Oz. *Ages 8 and up*

BOOKS: COURTESY THE PUBLISHERS; AUTHOR: SETH LLOYD; GETTY IMAGES

DID YOU KNOW?
The Child Mind Institute was founded in New York City in 2009.

Honor the loss of a loved one

It's OK to feel many emotions when someone you love dies. Here is some advice to help you cope.

When you love someone, it can hurt very much when they die. That powerful feeling is called grief, which is a natural response to the loss of someone we care about. For many children, the loss might be a beloved family member, such as a grandparent. Many people also feel grief after the death of a pet. Everyone reacts to loss and grief differently, and no response is wrong. Here are some steps you can take to understand grief and to cherish the memory of someone you loved.

Expect a range of emotions

It's normal to feel sad after someone dies, but many people initially experience another feeling. "Disbelief is a very common first reaction, as if the loss can't even be real," says Katie Peinovich, a clinical social worker at the Child Mind Institute in New York City. Sometimes, kids can also feel surprised or embarrassed by their emotions. "There is a wide range in how comfortable kids feel with emotions, particularly strong emotions," adds Peinovich. Kids may wonder if there is something wrong with them if they don't experience the feelings they were expecting. Some children may cry, and others may not. And that's OK, says Peinovich.

Plant a tree in their memory.

Find a trusted person to talk to

Children might be nervous to discuss a loved one who has died. But it's important to have someone to talk to. Peinovich says kids can think about who they trust with sharing their feelings. This could be a person at home or a counselor or teacher at school. Talking to good friends can be helpful too.

Resume activities if you wish

After a loss, one of the hardest transitions for a grieving person may be returning to their usual routine. It can feel strange for kids to go back to school and participate in their extracurricular activities. But picking back up with their everyday schedule doesn't mean kids don't miss their loved one or pet, and it's OK for anyone who is still grieving to do these things, says Peinovich. "Getting back into routines is important and can be helpful in moving through a loss," she says.

Remember that grief has no timeline

You might wonder when you will start to feel better. This answer is different for everyone, says Peinovich. If the loss happened within the past year, upcoming holidays that will be the "first" without the person or pet may be particularly sad. There may even be some guilt for feeling excited about the holidays. "It is possible to be both sad and happy at the same time," Peinovich says. If grief symptoms, like irritability, poor concentration, anxiety, or difficulty sleeping persist six months or more after the loss, a child may need their family's help to seek out a professional they can talk to.

Honor their memory

You can remember a person or pet in many ways. One can be doing something they loved, such as making one of their favorite family recipes. You could also talk to your family about planting a tree in their honor. Another idea: Put some items that remind you of them in a memory box. For a family member, it could be a photo and an item they wore. For a pet, it could include their collar and favorite toy. You are also welcome to use the form at right to record your memories as a special keepsake.

GETTY IMAGES

My special memories

Your name _____ Their name _____

Something I loved about them was _____

_____

_____

My favorite thing to do with them was _____

_____

_____

When I want to remember them, I can _____

_____

_____

Use this space to draw a cherished memory.

Puzzles

Crisscross

Each of these kinds of soup fits into this grid. Can you find where each one goes to complete the grid?

3 letters
PHO

4 letters
MISO
TACO

5 letters
BROTH
ONION
RAMEN

6 letters
TOMATO
WONTON

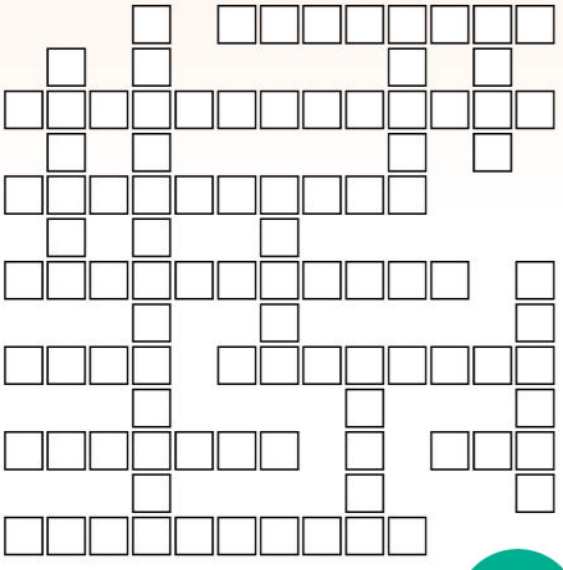
7 letters
EGG DROP

8 letters
CONSOMME
SHARK FIN

10 letters
MINESTRONE
YANKEE BEAN

11 letters
CORN CHOWDER

13 letters
BOUILLABAISSE
CHICKEN NOODLE



Take five

Five 5-letter words associated with the Netherlands are hidden in this grid. For each one, the first letter is somewhere in the first column, the second is somewhere in the second column, and so on. Can you find all five? (NEED A HINT? Check the bottom of the page.)

C	U	L	A	H
D	A	U	G	A
T	L	N	D	P
G	U	O	C	L
C	O	T	I	S

ALL THE SAME

Each answer contains the letters C-O-N. Those letters have been placed for you. Can you figure out the words?

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

1. Musician who leads the orchestra — CON□□□□□□
2. Upstairs section of theater seats — □□□CON□
3. Midwest state known for its cheese — □□□CON□□□
4. Hard material used to make sidewalks — CON□□□□□
5. Food that can fall out of a palm tree — □□CON□□

SUDOKU

To complete the grid, place the numbers from 1 to 6 exactly once in each row, column, and 2x3 bold-lined box.

6				5	
	4				6
		1	6		
		2	5		
3				6	
	5				1

Spot the difference

These two pictures of an electric car charging appear to be the same, but take a closer look. There are actually five differences. Can you see them?

PUZZLES BY PUZZABILITY

Take five hint: The word that begins with G ends with A.

He was crowned the winner.

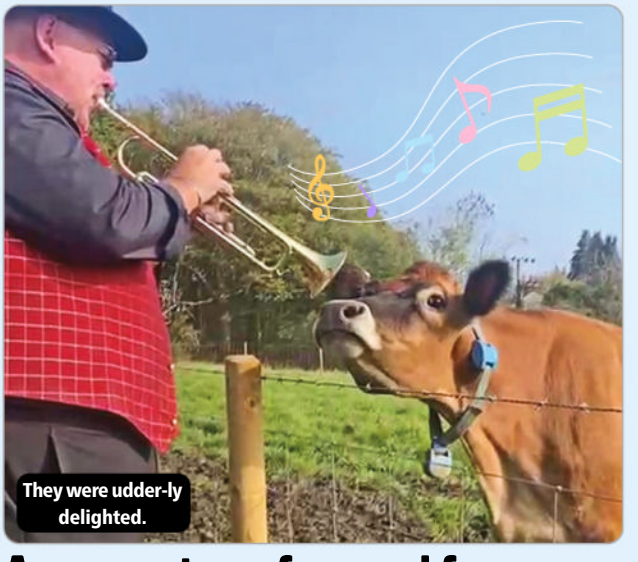
Stout squirrels take the spotlight

In Dinosaur Valley State Park in Texas, one fuzzy rodent looms large. Chunkosaurus Rex, a squirrel with a taste for acorns and crumbs, has won the first-ever Fat Squirrel Week. Inspired by Fat Bear Week, an annual contest in an Alaska park, this competition celebrates the fattest squirrel in all the Texas state parks. Finalists included Chunk Norris, Nutella, and Stanley "The Texas Tank." "We appreciate all the support for Chunkosaurus Rex during this hard-fought battle," Dinosaur Valley said on social media.

Every bite was golden.

Baker creates life-size *KPop* cake

Lara Mason challenged herself to create a life-size cake of Rumi from the hit Netflix film *KPop Demon Hunters* in less than a week. She carefully sculpted every detail of the character, including Rumi's purple braid. Using a metal frame for support, she carved the body from vanilla sponge cake, then added icing and modeling chocolate in various colors to form Rumi's skin, clothes, and facial features. Afterward, Mason donated the leftover cake to a local food bank so more people could enjoy her tasty creation.



They were udder-ly delighted.

A concert performed for cows

After studies found that music can soothe cows and boost milk production, a dairy farmer in England decided to invite a jazz band to play for her cows. The Dixiebeats, a six-piece group, performed a 30-minute concert for the animals at Smithills Open Farm. Farmer Caitlyn Horrocks said the cows "really enjoyed it," and one named Peggy loved it so much she stayed near the musicians the whole time. "One or two of them even had a taste of my trumpet," said band leader John Percival, "so that'll need a good clean."

Real or fake?

Do Androids dream of electric sheep?

A cozy little bed for a phone

For some people, putting their phone down at bedtime is easier said than done. But now the Swedish furniture company Ikea is releasing a product that could help. It's a tiny bed people can tuck their phone into before climbing under their own covers. Among its wood slats and linens is a chip that records how much time the phone spends "resting" each night, which enables users to track their downtime and earn rewards. Is this product real, or does it exist only in our dreams?*

*Real! Ikea has released its new Phone Sleep Collection in the United Arab Emirates. The company is offering a $27 voucher to any dedicated sleeper who tucks their phone in for seven hours each night over seven straight days.

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE; LARA CAKES; SWNS; IKEA; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3)

Editor's note

In this issue of *The Week Junior*, we're delighted to bring you some exciting news from the world of entertainment. As our cover story announces, *Wicked: For Good* will open in movie theaters on November 21 (p20). After the incredible success of last year's *Wicked* film, which was part one of a two-part adaptation of the hit musical, we expect another box-office sensation from Cynthia Erivo, Ariana Grande, and the rest of the cast. This week we also report on the new *Zootopia* film that's coming to theaters on November 26 (p21). And we have a story about Jim Henson, the genius puppeteer who created the Muppets, starting with an early version of Kermit the Frog in 1955. In addition to the furry creatures you see on pages 12 and 13, Vicky from our art team has placed Muppet photos on six more pages throughout the issue. Can you find them all? Which one is your favorite? Let us know at *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

Andrea Barbalich
Editorial Director

CHARITY OF THE WEEK

Leader Dogs for the Blind

This organization provides people who are blind or visually impaired with the necessary tools and skills to travel independently. It offers a free guide-dog program, training in the use of a white cane for orientation and mobility, and a summer camp for teenagers who are legally blind. Every year, Leader Dogs for the Blind matches about 200 people with guide dogs and provides approximately 100 people with white cane training. Find out more at leaderdog.org.

LEADER DOGS FOR THE BLIND

A passion for writing

"I started my own weekly email newsletter, inspired by *The Week Junior*, a magazine I've loved reading for years. Every Saturday, I send my newsletter to more than 50 friends and family members. I write book reviews, provide trivia, and run fun contests like 'Win a Book!' I spend about 6 to 10 hours a week on it. It's a fun way to build my writing and creative skills, and it's my way of learning and trying something new! One of my young readers even told me I inspired them to start a similar newsletter. That makes me very happy!"

Avyanna, 11, Washington, DC

Have you done something interesting or raised money for a cause you care about? Whatever you're up to, we want to hear about it at *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

RIDDLE OF THE WEEK
What's really easy to hold but not for very long?
Your breath

JOIN US FOR A VIRTUAL BOOK EVENT!

Our 2025 Best Books of the Year list will be revealed soon! To celebrate, we're hosting a special virtual event on December 4 at 7 p.m. ET. Attendees can meet four authors whose titles made the list: Derrick Barnes, author of *The Incredibly Human Henson Blayze*; Kate Messner, author of *The Trouble with Heroes*; and Raina Telgemeier and Scott McCloud, co-authors of *The Cartoonists Club*. Christina Soontornvat, author of *The Last Mapmaker*, will moderate the event. Find out how these amazing writers come up with their story ideas, illustrate their work, and more! Ask an adult to RSVP

THE WEEK Junior IT'S YOUR TURN Email your news, views, and photos to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

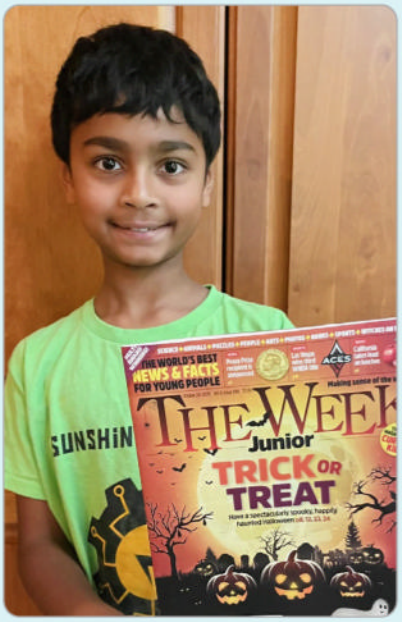
Your turn

YOUR PHOTOS

We'd love to see pictures you've taken or pictures with you in them! Have an adult email them to us at *hello@theweekjunior.com*, along with anything you would like us to know about what's happening in the photo.

"Your article on the jack-o'-lanterns helped inspire part of my Halloween costume! I was the headless horseman, and this was my papier-mâché head I carried around." Jack, 11, Massachusetts

"I wanted to share a picture of a vanilla-chocolate icing cake that I made for Diwali." Elina, 8, Texas



"I loved solving this week's quiz. My favorite article was about the Asian golden cat!" Saketh, 8, Oregon

Teacher OF THE WEEK

Teacher's Name: **John Severson**

School: **Shadow Forest Elementary**

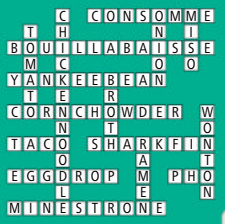
"Mr. Severson is really funny. He manages to make learning easy and fun at the same time. If we ever have a question or are stuck on a math problem, Mr. Severson helps us so we are able to understand the problem. To be honest, Mr. Severson is the overall best teacher I've ever had."

Maya, 10, Texas

Nominate your teacher for Teacher of the Week! Send your reason for the nomination, a photo of your teacher, and your school's name and address to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: LEADER DOGS FOR THE BLIND

Puzzle answers (from page 26)



Take five
canal
Dutch
tulip
Gouda
clogs

All the same
1. conductor
2. balcony
3. Wisconsin
4. concrete
5. coconut

6	2	3	1	5	4
1	4	5	3	2	6
5	3	1	6	4	2
4	6	2	5	1	3
3	1	4	2	6	5
2	5	6	4	3	1

Quiz answers (from page 30) **1** c) Viper **2** a) Purdue University **3** Yogurt **4** False. She lives with her dad. **5** c) Washington, DC **6** True **7** b) Kendrick Lamar **8** Crazy Dave **9** Bogotá, Colombia **10** False. They first appeared on *Sam and Friends*. **11** b) 34.3% **12** c) Kansas City Current **13** a) Least concern **14** True **15** Chunkosaurus Rex

We want to hear from you! To have your letters, photos, nominations, recommendations, or ideas considered for inclusion in the magazine, please include your first name, age, and state with your submission. By emailing your submission to us, you give *The Week Junior* consent to publish it in the magazine and online. Please get your parent/guardian's permission before sending anything

How much of this week's news can you remember?

1 What type of snake is Gary De'Snake in the animated movie *Zootopia 2*?

a) Cobra b) Python c) Viper

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

2 Which men's college basketball program had the top-ranked team going into this season?

a) Purdue University

b) University of Florida

c) University of Arizona

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

3 What food did scientists make using an ancient recipe that includes ants?

4 True or false? In the book *Winging It*, Luna at first lives in California with her mom.

True ☐ False ☐

5 Photographer Tawny Chatmon's first-ever solo museum exhibition is in which city?

a) New York b) Philadelphia

c) Washington, DC

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

6 True or false? A prehistoric marine reptile found in the UK, called an ichthyosaur, had a very long snout.

True ☐ False ☐

7 Which artist received the most 2026 Grammy nominations?

a) Bad Bunny b) Kendrick Lamar

c) Sabrina Carpenter

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

8 What is the name of the neighbor in the video game Plants vs. Zombies: Replanted?

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

9 Which city won a 2025 Earthshot Prize for reducing air pollution by 24%?

10 True or false? Jim Henson's Muppets first appeared on television in the show *Sesame Street*.

True ☐ False ☐

11 A recent report found that how much of the world's electricity is powered by renewable energy?

a) 21.2%

b) 34.3%

c) 45.4%

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

12 In the National Women's Soccer League playoffs, NJ/NY Gotham FC won a shocking upset against which team?

a) Portland Thorns

b) Orlando Pride

c) Kansas City Current

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

13 The International Union for Conservation of Nature has moved green sea turtles to which risk category?

a) Least concern

b) Vulnerable

c) Endangered

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

14 True or false? The Yellow Brick Road in *Wicked: For Good* was made from 1 million tulips.

True ☐ False ☐

15 What is the name of the squirrel that won the first-ever Fat Squirrel Week?

THE WEEK Junior

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ELECTRONIC ARTS, INC.; GETTY IMAGES (2); UNIVERSAL PICTURES; DISNEY

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SECRETS OF THE PENGUINS
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